



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS WHITE PLAINS (AFS-4)  
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Encl: (1) USS WHITE PLAINS (AFS 4) Command History 1981 (3 copies)

1. Enclosure (1) is provided as required by reference (a).

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## USS WHITE PLAINS (AFS 4) COMMAND HISTORY 1981

USS WHITE PLAINS (AFS 4), known throughout the Western Pacific as the "Orient Express", officially concluded her regular overhaul for 1980 November 30th, at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

The year 1981 was greeted by the officers and men of the USS WHITE PLAINS in her homeport of Yokosuka. The Holiday Season's celebrations having ended, WHITE PLAINS departed Yokosuka, 6 January, for Subic Bay, R.P., to begin her (3) month testing period which included Systems Qualifications Tests, Operation Plant Examinations, and Refresher Training.

During her (10) day transit to Subic, WHITE PLAINS conducted Systems Qualifications Test (SQTs), with USNS ASHTABULA. This test is designed to test various equipment necessary for successful replenishment at sea as well as familiarize crewmembers with the art of conventional replenishment. The (SQTs) were intensive, involving cooperation from all hands while being conducted for several days and nights.

Members of the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet Propulsion Examining Board (PEB) conducted an Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE), aboard WHITE PLAINS from 12 February to 16 February off the coast of the Philippines near Subic Bay. These examinations are conducted onboard all ships after completion of overhaul and at other periodic intervals.

The OPPE consisted of three parts, Oral exams, written exams and casualty control drills. The ship's engineers must demonstrate proficiency in each of these categories in order to pass the exam. One board member said, "This is by far, the best performance of any AFS-class ship."

Scoring in 90's on (SQTs) with OPPE half, completed, WHITE PLAINS departed Subic Bay, 14 February, enroute to Hong Kong, where WHITE PLAINS enjoyed (5) days of "max liberty" from 16 to 21 February.

During transit to and from Hong Kong WHITE PLAINS completed the OPPE with a high score.

On February 23, USS WHITE PLAINS commenced Refresher Training off the coast of Luzon, Republic of the Philippines. During the week long re-training period, observers from the Fleet Training Group (FTG) Yokosuka, were embarked to observe the crew's performance in various drills and exercises. Among these were the battle problems in which the entire crew manned their respective General Quarters Stations for several hours.

Upon completion of REFTRA, WHITE PLAINS was awarded the grade of "excellent."

In the middle of Refresher Training on 26 February, WHITE PLAINS served as the on-scene Commander of the detailed search and rescue operations of a tragic C-130 crash which resulted in 23 deaths. One person survived and was treated by LT (b) (6), WHITE PLAINS' Medical Doctor. The sole survivor was transported from WHITE PLAINS' Flight Deck to nearby Cubi Point, Philippines Hospital for further medical attention.

March 3rd at Subic Bay, Rear Admiral James Lyons, Commander Task Force 73, came aboard WHITE PLAINS and presented the ship with the Marjorie Sterett Award for the ship's outstanding performance over the past year. Later that day, WHITE PLAINS departed Subic enroute to Yokosuka for a two-week upkeep period before her return to the Indian Ocean.

WHITE PLAINS sponsored a Dependent's Cruise 21 March, for family and friends of the crew. This brief cruise demonstrated to family members underway replenishment (CONREP), with ships alongside to port and starboard.

March 25th, WHITE PLAINS returned to Subic Bay for a two-day loadout, in preparation for I.O. number (1) for 1981.

WHITE PLAINS arrived on station 1 April supplying both MIDWAY and INDEPENDENCE Battle Groups with much needed supplies. The "Orient Express" made frequent transits to Diego Garcia and Muscat, Oman, for replenishment of shipboard parts, supplies and fresh provisions for the I.O. fleet. In May the "Orient Express" transferred a record number of supplies to the INDEPENDENCE and AMERICA Battle Groups. Through 10 June, WHITE PLAINS provided stores to the KITTY HAWK and AMERICA Battle Groups before beginning the long transit home on 11 June.

WHITE PLAINS was transitting the South China Sea early on the morning of 13 June when her lookouts sighted an overloaded boat 150 miles off the coast of Vietnam. Twice more, WHITE PLAINS lookouts sighted Vietnamese Refugees; and in a six-hour period she rescued 211 men, women and children. Upon arrival into Subic Bay 15 June, the refugees were transferred to officials for medical attention and relocated to nearby Cubi Point where they were processed into the Refugee-Camp.

USS WHITE PLAINS had just completed her 94 day Indian Ocean Deployment and was greeted by sixteen dependents sons from Yokosuka, Japan on June 15th at Subic Bay, R.P. The youngsters were participating in a one week "Tiger Cruise" which is sponsored annually by the WHITE PLAINS.

The "Orient Express" returned to Yokosuka the 23rd of June for a two-week upkeep period. She departed Yokosuka on 7 July to conduct VERTREP exercises with her sister ship, JDS SOHYA, in Tokyo Wan before departing for four days of loadouts in preparation for I.O. deployment number (2), for 1981.

WHITE PLAINS spent the next five days enroute Subic Bay with Midshipmen embarked. During the transit intensive training was conducted for (10) Midshipmen which gave them a indebt look at how an MLSF ship operates. On 9 July WHITE PLAINS conducted an UNREP of opportunity with the USS MIDWAY (CV-41), who had to leave early from Hong Kong without getting all her provisions.

While in Subic the "Orient Express" unloaded all of the provisions and fleet freight that was awaiting delivery to the battle groups in the Indian Ocean. On July 17th, WHITE PLAINS was underway again, this time enroute to the I.O. via Singapore. On 19 July WHITE PLAINS rendezvoused and transferred equipment with the USS SHASTA, an (AE) which had just

completed her turn in the I.O.

WHITE PLAINS anchored in Singapore, on 21 July to enjoy (3) days of liberty in conjunction with onloading fresh fruits, vegetable and dairy products. On 24 July WHITE PLAINS left Singapore for the I.O.

The "Orient Express" had been hard at work since arriving in the I.O. on 1 August 1981. WHITE PLAINS conducted a major UNREP with the AMERICA Battle Group followed four days later by a very long (over 16 hours) night UNREP with the KITTY HAWK Battle Group in extremely heavy seas and wind conditions.

Commanding Officer, Captain M. H. MUNSEY was relieved on 4 September by Captain D. L. KERR who is no stranger to the WESTPAC, having been "Air Boss" on the USS MIDWAY from 1977 to 1979.

WHITE PLAINS departed the I.O. on 5 September enroute to Fremantle, Australia. The crew enjoyed six-days of liberty from 15 to 21 September, in Australia, a place WHITE PLAINS had not been for five years.

The nine-day transit from Australia to Subic was busy with G. Q. drills, safety lectures and preparing for the upcoming Command Inspection.

WHITE PLAINS arrived in Subic Bay 30 September for 19 days of upkeep.

Rear Admiral Roane, CTF-73, and staff conducted a Command Inspection 17 October 1981 aboard WHITE PLAINS. The staff inspected all areas of the ship, from safety equipment to ship's company.

WHITE PLAINS passed the Command Inspection with an overall high average of 95, while establishing a record high score of 97 for WESTPAC ships on the 3-M Inspection. Departing Subic Bay, 19 October, and arriving in Singapore four days later, WHITE PLAINS held a one day loadout of fresh fruits and vegetables for fleet issue, thus preparing for the third and final I.O. deployment of 1981.

The "Orient Express" returned on station and provided much needed stores for the CORAL SEA and her battle group and several Australian (MLSF) ships during the month of November.

During the second week in December WHITE PLAINS became the first forward deployed MLSF ship to pass an unannounced OPRE (Operational Propulsion Plant Recertification Examination) on the first try. WHITE PLAINS accomplished this without the benefit of a mobile training team assist visit and at the end of a long and arduous 6 month I.O. deployment.

WHITE PLAINS enjoyed (3) days of liberty in the Philippines, before returning to family and friends 17 December. Out of the entire year of 1981, the "Orient Express" spent only 42 days in her homeport of Yokosuka, Japan, which is believed to be a record.